

## ***Central Region Employees Honored after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita***

Acting Maritime Administrator John Jamian traveled to the Gulf Coast to recognize the men and women of the Maritime Administration's Central Region who distinguished themselves in the performance of their jobs during the recovery and relief efforts following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.



***Acting Maritime Administrator John Jamian receiving a plaque proclaiming January 31, 2006, as "Maritime Administration Ready Reserve Fleet Day" from City of Beaumont Mayor Guy Goodson.***

***Photo courtesy of Brent Christopher***

On January 30, Jamian presided over an awards ceremony in New Orleans, where he was joined by Port Director of New Orleans Gary LaGrange, MARAD's Central Region Director Dee Varshney and the captains and crew members of MARAD ships involved in the recovery and relief efforts.

Jamian personally thanked each ship manager and crew member of all MARAD vessels involved in this unprecedented domestic relief effort: *Equality State*, *Wright*, *Empire State*, *State of Maine*, *Sirius*, *Texas Clipper II*, *Cape Kennedy*, *Cape Knox*, *Diamond State*, *Cape Vincent* and *Cape Victory*.

Jamian stated, "Our MARAD ships and our people played a key role in the New Orleans, Lake Charles and Beaumont areas' recovery efforts from both hurricanes and have been absolutely crucial to restoring the Gulf Coast economy that powers the national economy."

On January 31, Jamian traveled to Beaumont, Texas, where he recognized the many employees of the Central Region who participated in the response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Jamian was honored by Mayor of Beaumont Guy Goodson and members of the Beaumont City Council who hosted a luncheon to recognize MARAD's efforts during Hurricane Rita. Jefferson County Judge Carl Griffith, Jefferson County Commissioners, Varshney, and various local emergency responders also attended.

During the celebration, Jamian commented on the good relationship between Beaumont city officials and MARAD. He said, "The city of Beaumont is very welcoming to two important Maritime Administration programs, the Beaumont Reserve Fleet and the Ready Reserve Force. Our relationship with Beaumont is one of which we are proud. The federal government and this wonderful city have established a model relationship that serves our country well."

There were, Mr. Jamian pointed out, "People in our New Orleans office when Katrina came through, who evacuated to Port Arthur and kept doing their work. Then, when Rita came through, they evacuated again but kept doing their work."

Jamian further stated, "The Ready Reserve Force ships *Cape Vincent* and *Cape Victory* assumed the role of a steel version of Noah's Ark by taking 380 emergency vehicles from miles around on board to weather Hurricane Rita. It was incredible to us at headquarters in Washington to hear about the fire engines and ambulances coming on board our ships in Beaumont. Then came the request from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department to wheel two police helicopters on board for search and reconnaissance after the storm. And let's not forget the call from Police Officer Renee Utley from the Port of Beaumont to house 17 dogs."

Jamian concluded the awards ceremony by stating to the Central Region employees, "Your response to the overwhelming disasters has been efficient, level-headed and thorough. All of you have done so much to help the victims of these storms and aid in the recovery, and I want you to know that we are all very proud of you."